

U.S.S. DUXBURY BAY (AVP-38),
% Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California, 1/2
September 27, 1945.

INFORMAL WAR HISTORY OF U.S.S. DUXBURY BAY.

The U.S.S. Duxbury Bay, seaplane tender small, was commissioned December 31, 1944 at Lake Washington Shipyards, Kirkland, Washington, Commander F. N. Howe, U.S. Navy assuming command.

The new year saw the Duxbury Bay feverishly loading supplies, fitting out and undergoing trials which took us well into the month of January 1945.

On January 21, 1945 we proceeded from Seattle, Washington to San Diego, California via Alameda, California arriving in San Diego on January 27th.

We then started our tryout period commonly referred to as "shakedown". With San Diego as our home port, we commenced a period of concentrated training and practice at sea in all things we might be expected to do as a unit of the U.S. Fleet.

On February 25th we received our graduation mark, "above average", and with this the feeling that we were ready to do our job.

And so on March 12, 1945 we sailed from San Diego to Pearl Harbor where we were given a working inspection by Admiral Price who was destined to be our boss in future combat operations.

After a pleasant week we again headed west and our next port of call was the atoll Eniwetok in the Marshall group. Here we experienced our first taste of seaplane operations acting as tender to VPB-19; a veteran squadron of patrol planes. Besides valuable experience gained in routine seaplane tending operations, we also had the opportunity to render medical aid to the crew of a plane which made a forced water landing close by our ship.

So at last we were ready for actual operations, and on April 12th we set out for Apra Harbor, Guam arriving on April 15th. On the 17th of April we were ordered to sail for Ulithi Harbor in the Carolines arriving there April 18th.

After a week at Ulithi Harbor we once again received orders to move forward, this time right up to the front lines, to Kerama Retto, which was seaplane base for the Okinawa operation.

After an uneventful passage and within sight of our destination we were ordered to search for survivors of the bombed Hospital Ship U.S.S. COMFORT which had been attacked by a suicide plane the previous night. After completing search without sighting any survivors we steamed into Kerama Retto and pitched in our hand with the other tenders of Fleet Air Wing ONE, who were involved in the largest seaplane operation ever conducted.

We then started the saga of Kerama Retto with routine servicing of seaplanes during the day and routine ducking of Kamikazes at night. During the period April 29 to July 1 we participated at Kerama Retto in Phase Two of the Capture of Okinawa Gunto. During this time there were numerous attacks by enemy aircraft but only on the 6th of May were we able to get in a shot at any of the attackers. As a result of this skirmish we suffered our sole casualty of the cruise, Chief Quartermaster, R.C. Nixon, who was killed at his battle station by shrapnel.

On the 8th of July we were assigned the major job of laying out 102 seaplane moorings and charting of a new seadrome area in Chimu Wan, Okinawa. This was done in the record time of four days and on July 14th the seaplanes and

INFORMAL WAR HISTORY OF U.S.S. DUXBURY BAY (Cont'd)

tenders of Fleet Air Wing ONE shifted operation from Kerama Retto to Chimu Wan with the Duxbury Bay acting as control tender for the operation.

Again we took up the task of routine servicing of seaplanes at Chimu Wan, this time having direct contact with VPB-27 whose splendid reputation as a combat patrol squadron, and esprit de corps, we were to share in reflected glory.

Except for occasional jaunts to Buckner Bay, Okinawa acting as Fleet Post Office for ships and squadrons in the Wing and short periods at sea avoiding the ever present typhoons, we remained at Chimu Wan with our squadron until after the cease firing orders and peace terms had been signed.

Peace was not an electrifying term to us; we had read the peace negotiations which had rung down the curtain in Europe. We knew we had the Japs licked and we realized that it was just a matter of time before we forced them to come to our terms. So, accordingly, it was with a feeling of relief rather than hysterical joy that we witnessed the final phase of this costly conflict from our front row seats.

True, we all hoped for a chance to take part in the occupation of Japan but we were not favored with this task. On 14 September 1945 we were ordered to Jinsen, Korea as part of the occupation force operating in that area.

Enroute we had the chance to destroy a floating mine which was menacing vessels in the shipping lanes.

On the 17th of September we arrived at Jinsen and assumed duties as Fleet Post Office, our squadron, VPB-20, acting as mail courier planes for ships in this area.

So we have finished our war tasks and stepped into our new role as peacemaker, secure in the belief that not once have our men or ship failed in any task assigned; on the contrary we have always had a reputation as a smart ship, a good gang of men.


F. N. HOWE,

Commander, U.S. Navy,
Commanding U.S.S. Duxbury Bay.